

NORTHERN IRELAND VALUATION TRIBUNAL

**THE RATES (NORTHERN IRELAND) ORDER 1977 (AS AMENDED) AND THE
VALUATION TRIBUNAL RULES (NORTHERN IRELAND) 2007**

CASE REFERENCE NUMBER: 35/09

MS ANN THERIEN – APPELLANT

AND

COMMISSIONER OF VALUATION NI – RESPONDENT

Northern Ireland Valuation Tribunal

Chairman: Mr David Sharpe

Members: Mr Thomas Matthews and Mr Robert McCann

Belfast, 14th December 2009

DECISION

The unanimous decision of the Tribunal is that the Decision on Appeal of the Commissioner of Valuation for Northern Ireland dated 4th August 2009 is upheld and the Appellant's appeal is dismissed.

REASONS

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This is a reference under Article 54 of the Rates (Northern Ireland) Order 1977 as amended ("the 1977 Order").
- 1.2 By a Notice of Appeal dated 7th September 2009 the Appellant appealed to the Northern Ireland Valuation Tribunal against the Decision on Appeal of the Commissioner of Valuation for Northern Ireland ("the Commissioner") dated 4th August 2009 in respect of the Valuation of a hereditament situated at 6 Maple Park, Ballytromery, Crumlin, BT29 4WZ.
- 1.3 All parties to the Appeal had indicated that they were each content that the Appeal be disposed of on the basis of written representations in accordance with Rule 11 of the Rules and accordingly there was no appearance before the Tribunal by or on behalf of any of the parties.

2. The Law

- 2.1 The statutory provisions are set out in the 1977 Order, as amended by the Rates (Amendment) (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 ("the 2006 Order").
- 2.2 The tribunal considered the terms of the Schedule 12 of the 1977 Order as amended which states as follows;

7.-(1) Subject to the provisions of this Schedule, for the purposes of this Order the capital value of a hereditament shall be the amount which, on the assumptions mentioned in paragraphs 9 to 15, the hereditament might reasonably have been expected to realise if it had been sold on the open market by a willing seller on the relevant capital valuation date.

(2) In estimating the capital value of a hereditament for the purposes of any revision of a valuation list, regard shall be had to the capital values in that valuation list of comparable hereditaments in the same state and circumstances as the hereditament whose capital value is being revised.

- 2.3 Article 54(3) of the 1977 Order provides that, on appeal, any valuation shown in a valuation list with respect to a hereditament shall be deemed to be correct until the contrary is shown.

3. The Evidence

The Tribunal heard no oral evidence but had before it the Appellant's Notice of Appeal dated 7th September 2009 and copies of various documents including the following:-

- 3.1 The Commissioner's Decision on Appeal dated 4th August 2009
- 3.2 A document entitled "Presentation of Evidence" submitted on behalf of the Commissioner by Deirdre Shiels of Land and Property Services.
- 3.3 Correspondence between the Tribunal and the Parties.
- 3.4 A single sheet of paper without heading on which five addresses were written together with their purported sale price. This document was submitted by the Appellant and is referred to as comparables in the Notice of Appeal.

All of these documents had been provided to all of the Parties who had each been given an opportunity to consider and respond to them before being considered by the Tribunal.

4. The Facts

Based upon the information before it, the Tribunal determined, upon the balance of probabilities, the following facts:-

- 4.1 The hereditament is an end terrace two storey house situated at 6 Maple Park, Ballytromery, Crumlin (the Subject Property). The Subject Property was stated to be owned by the Appellant who the Tribunal understood to be the rate payer. The Tribunal had no other information regarding the title to the Subject Property nor regarding its physical construction and characteristics save as mentioned in the papers before the Tribunal and referred to herein.

- 4.2 The Subject Property is of red brick and slate construction and occupies an end terrace corner site in a private development off the Lurgan Road in Crumlin village. Parking bays are on site. It has a gross external area (GEA) of 157m².
- 4.3 The Capital Value Assessment of the Subject Property is £135,000. In arriving at the Capital Value Assessment figure regard was had to the assessments in the valuation list of properties considered comparable and also to market sales of certain sales in the general locality. These comparables are set out in the Schedule to the "Presentation of Evidence" submitted on behalf on the Commissioner. There are a total of 5 comparables within the development and 5 comparables within the locality. Further particulars of the comparables were provided together with photographs of all but two of the comparables. In addition 4 properties referred to by the Appellant from Glenavy and Crumlin are set out.
- 4.4 The Capital Value Assessments of the comparables were all unchallenged. The Capital Value of the subject property had been reduced by the District Valuer from £140,000 to £135,000.

5. The Appellants Submission

The Appellant, in summary, has made the following submissions:-

- 5.1 The Appellant was looking to purchase a home in July 2005 and at that time re-sale semi-detached homes in Lisburn were selling for less than £120,000 and new detached homes (some with Garages) in Ballinderry and Magheralin were selling for £130,000-135,000.
- 5.2 The Subject Property should be evaluated with comparable properties as of January 2005 and not from current market value and sales.
- 5.3 The Appellant submits that the Respondent was relying upon the sales prices of similar properties in the development regardless of the date of 1 January 2005 and enclosed a list of comparable semi-detached properties.
- 5.4 Save as already referred to the Appellant did not seek to otherwise challenge the appropriateness of the comparables submitted in evidence on behalf of the Commissioner nor the accuracy of the particulars of those comparables.

6. The Respondents Submissions

In summary the following submissions were made on behalf of the Commissioner.

- 6.1 The Capital Value Assessment of the Subject Property was carried out in

accordance with the legislation contained in the 1977 Order and in particular paragraphs 7 and 9-15 inclusive of Schedule 12 of the 1977 Order. In doing so, the requirements in Schedule 12 that "regard shall be had to the Capital Values in the Valuation list of Comparable hereditaments in the same state and circumstances" was duly observed.

- 6.2 The Appellants initial comments are very general in nature.
- 6.3 The Capital Value of the Subject Property was assessed as required by the legislation.
- 6.4 The five comparables referred to by the Appellant vary in type and location and undermine the assessment on the Subject of £135,000 as a reasonable estimate of value with the subject at 157m² (GEA) being substantially larger than all of the properties quoted.

7. The Tribunal's Decision

- 7.1 Article 54 of the 1977 Order enables a person to appeal to the Tribunal against the decision of the Commissioner on appeal as to Capital Value. In this case the Capital Value has been assessed at the AVD at a figure of £135,000. On behalf of the Commissioner it has been contended that figure is fair and reasonable in comparison to other properties and the statutory basis for valuation has been referred to and especially reference has been made to Schedule 12 to the 1977 Order in arriving at that assessment.
- 7.2 The Tribunal must begin its task by taking account of an important statutory presumption contained within the 1977 Order. Article 54(3) of the 1977 Order provides: *"On an appeal under this Article, any valuation shown in a valuation list with respect to a hereditament shall be deemed to be correct until the contrary is shown"*. It is therefore up to the Appellant in any case to challenge and to displace that presumption, or perhaps for the Commissioner's decision on appeal to be seen to be so manifestly incorrect that the tribunal must take steps to rectify the situation.
- 7.3 The Tribunal saw nothing in the approach adopted to achieve the initial assessment as to Capital Value, nor in the Decision of the Commissioner on appeal, to suggest that the matter had been assessed in anything other than the prescribed manner provided for by Schedule 12, paragraphs 7 (and following) of the 1977 Order. The statutory mechanism has been expressly referred to in the Commissioner's Submissions to the Tribunal and the Tribunal notes the evidence submitted as to comparables and concludes that the correct statutory approach has been followed in this case in assessing the Capital Value.
- 7.4 The Tribunal then turns to consider whether the evidence put before the Tribunal or the arguments made by the Appellant are sufficient to displace the statutory presumption. The Appellant's arguments have been summarised above.

7.5 The Tribunal having examined the facts of the matter and the arguments and submissions finds that there is insufficient evidence to support the Appellant's Submissions. The Appellant has not displaced the statutory presumption that the valuation shown in the Valuation List in respect of the Subject Property shall be deemed to be correct until the contrary is shown. Accordingly the Tribunal's unanimous decision is that the Commissioner's Decision on Appeal dated 4th August 2009 is upheld and the Appeal is dismissed.

David Sharpe, Chairman
Northern Ireland Valuation Tribunal

Date decision recorded in register and issued to parties: